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Rev. Mr. HALL's

ORATION,

DELIVERED

JUNE 30, 1788.

REV. MR. HALL

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ORATION,
DELIVERED AT THE REQUEST
OF THE
INHABITANTS OF KEENE,
JUNE 30, 1788;

TO CELEBRATE THE RATIFICATION
OF THE
FEDERAL CONSTITUTION
BY THE
STATE OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

BY AARON HALL, M. A. *K*
MEMBER OF THE LATE STATE CONVENTION.

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M,DCC,LXXXVIII,

KEENE, June 30. 1788.

Fellow-Citizens,

WITH the most humiliating conviction of my inability to perform that part of the celebration of this day, to which I have the honor to be appointed, I submit this (my first) publication to the publick. Nothing but the important and pleasing crisis to which our young American Empire is advancing, added to the importunities of some valued friends, could have influenced me (especially with a very short notice) so far to have mistaken my abilities as to have presented this Oration to the publick eye : And the recollection of the many favors conferred upon me by the Inhabitants of this Town, induces me to subject myself to that candour, which views with kindness the feeblest efforts of an honest mind.

The Publick's most obedient Servant,



THE AUTHOR,



ORATION.

TH E great, the important object for which the collected wisdom of AMERICA was summoned together, is at length accomplished.

My Fellow-Citizens and Countrymen, I congratulate you on the glorious event which Heaven has been pleased to produce in our favour—And while we would do honor to the labours of a WASHINGTON, a FRANKLIN, a JOHNSON, a LIVINGSTON, a MORRIS, a RUTLEDGE, a PINCKNEY, and other political fathers of our country, who dared to step forth in the greatest dangers to defend American Liberty; let us not forget our gratitude to the King of Nations, and Lord of Hosts.

IMPRESSED

IMPRESSED with the keenest sensibility on this joyous occasion, I will hazard a few thoughts on the great subject of our Federal Government. When we consider the greatness of the prize we contended for, the doubtful nature of the contest in the late war, the favourable manner in which it has terminated, together with the establishment of a permanent energetic government, perfectly consistent with the true liberties of the people, and this obtained in a time of peace, a thing not paralleled in history. I repeat it, when we consider these things, we shall find the greatest possible reason for gratitude and rejoicing.— This is a theme that will afford the greatest delight to every benevolent mind, whether the event in contemplation be viewed as the source of present enjoyment, or the parent of future happiness.

TILL this period, the revolution in America, has never appeared to me to be completed ; but this is laying on the cap-stone of the
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great American Empire ; and, in my opinion, we have occasion to felicitate ourselves on the lot which Providence has assigned us, whether we view it in a natural, political, or moral point of light.

THE frame of government now adopted for the United States of America, gives her citizens rank, if not superiority, among the nations of the earth ; and it has the advantage of being concerted, when the rights of mankind are better known and more clearly understood, than in any former age of the world. This constitution of government contains the treasures of knowledge, obtained by the labours of philosophers, sages, and legislators, through a long succession of rolling years, so that we have the collected wisdom of ages interwoven in this form of government. The three branches are created and made by the original independent sovereignty of the people, and are so balanced as to be a check upon each other : And after two, four, and six years, each branch
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are to return into the bosom of their country, to give an account "for the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or evil." It has a most friendly aspect on literature, and opens her arms wide to extend and encourage commerce—lays a fair foundation for the free cultivation of our lands, and to alleviate the Farmer, whose hands have long been relaxed by reason of too heavy taxation—Is wisely calculated to promote the progressive refinement of manners—the growing liberality of sentiment—and above all, the pure and benign light of revelation, may have free course and be glorified in the blessings of society. If therefore the citizens of America should not be completely free and happy, the fault will be entirely their own, so long as they may choose wise and good men to set at helm.

THE present crisis, my fellow-citizens, is so important, that silence would be a crime.— Shall Britain, (especially all her sons of free and liberal minds) while she envies our rising glory,

glory, approbate this system of government ? Shall France, shall Holland, and all Europe; applaud the wisdom of our Constitution, and we be inattentive to our private, domestick, and national enjoyments ; while Heaven has crowned all our blessings, by giving us a fairer opportunity for political happiness, than any other nation has ever been indulged with.

PERHAPS some may think I am too sanguine in my prospects. I grant it is yet to be decided, whether this Constitution will ultimately prove a blessing or a curse—not to the present generation alone, for with our fate, probably will the destiny of unborn millions be involved. I know that the wisest Constitutions, and even that from Heaven itself, has been, and may again be perverted by venal and designing men ; and on this account, I am not displeased that the Constitution has been objected to, and carefully scrutinized by the jealous, yet honest intentions of many of our worthy citizens ; as these things will lie before

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Congress,

Congress, as a check upon them not to invade the liberties of the people. But I will venture to say, with confidence too, that we shall be happy and flourish as a Nation and Empire, if the following sentiments, suggested by the great WASHINGTON, take place and prevail :—

“ 1st. An indissoluble union of the States, under one Federal head.

“ 2d. A sacred regard to publick justice.

“ 3d. The adoption of a proper peace establishment; (meaning a well disciplined Militia.)

“ 4th. The prevalence of that pacific and friendly disposition among the People of the United States, which will induce them to forget their local prejudices and policies, and make those mutual concessions which are requisite to the general prosperity; and in some instances, to sacrifice their individual advantages to the interest of the community.”

THESE, my Countrymen, are the great PILLARS on which the glorious building of our

our Constitution depends—on which our national character and prosperity must be supported—LIBERTY, that life of man, is the basis—Whoever therefore would attempt to overthrow this foundation, under whatever specious pretext, will merit the bitterest execration and severest punishment his injured country can inflict. However, the cup of blessing, in a political sense, is put into our hands, and happiness is ours, if we will make it so, from the overturns of Divine Providence; yet how much depends upon our conduct, I repeat it, how much depends upon our conduct, whether we will be respectable and prosperous, or contemptible and miserable as a Nation. The best things in this imperfect state are liable to be perverted to the worst of purposes.

THIS is a very critical moment with America; the eyes of Europe, and the world, are upon us; and it is a time of political probation with every free citizen. It is certain,
that

that the best Constitution, and the best Rulers, will avail nothing to the happiness of a people, without good, industrious, and loyal subjects.

It is a most important day with America ; in my opinion, as much so as it was in any period of the war ; and of the last moment, as to our national character, for all to subscribe to our Federal Government ; and though all cannot think alike, which is not to be expected, any more than it is that we should all look alike ; yet it becomes us to unite in the common cause as a BAND OF BROTHERS, since we are all embarked together for ourselves and our posterity ; and notwithstanding there are some who cannot rejoice to so high a degree, at present, on the ratification of the Federal Government, yet I presume to say, that their living under it a short time, will give them to realize the felicity that others anticipate.

Who

Who would be willing that this should be the ill-fated moment for relaxing the powers of the Union, and exposing us to become the sport of European politicks, and to be made dupes to serve their interested purposes? Our Union alone, must give us dignity, power, and credit abroad; wealth, honor, and felicity at home; and without this, it must be extremely disagreeable to reflect, that so much blood and treasure have been lavished to no purpose; that so many sufferings have been encountered without a compensation; and that so many sacrifices have been made in vain. It is a given point on all hands, I believe, that the State of NEW-HAMPSHIRE, from its local situation, will be more benefited than any one in the Union. Who then from a moments reflection, could be willing that we should exclude ourselves from the Union, and sink into the ruins of liberty, abused to licentiousness?

FROM a serious consideration of the above, with other weighty objects, I have been decidedly

cidedly in favour of the Constitution, and have endeavoured to reflect honour upon those who placed me in a situation to act a part in this grand affair ; and who is there, my Fellow-Citizens, but must have sincere intentions for the happiness of that country where he is born, and where he expects to die, and leave the fruit of his labours to his tender offspring ?

WHILE our hearts glow with joy and gratitude, to the great parent of present and future happiness, on this signal occasion, that he has been in the counsels of the great, and made them so unanimous in sentiment, (which to me, all circumstances considered, is one of the greatest events America ever experienced) I say while we recognize these things with grateful souls, let us close with the earnest prayer of General WASHINGTON, in his circular letter :——“ That God would have the States over which he presides, in his holy protection—that he would incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination

dination and obedience to government—to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another of their fellow-citizens of the United States at large—And finally, that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind, which were the characteristicks of the divine author of our blessed religion ; and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation.”



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